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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR DRL/MLGA ALYSON GRUNDER AND LYNN SICADE
FOR IO/RHS REBECCA JOVIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA WELCOMES DIALOGUE ON PRIORITIES FOR UNGA
THIRD COMMITTEE

REF: A. SECSTATE 93981
[1](#)B. GOMEZ-GRUNDER 9/4/08 TELCON
[1](#)C. 2007 BUENOS AIRES 1055

[1](#)1. (SBU) Poloff raised ref A points with Minister Silvia
Fernandez, Director for the Argentine MFA's Office of Human
Rights on September 5.

No-action motions

Poloff thanked the GOA for voting against all no-action
motions and voting for country-specific resolutions against
Belarus, Burma, the DPRK, and Iran in 2007. She asked
whether the GOA would do the same this year. Fernandez
indicated that the GOA would continue to take a stand against
all no-motion actions raised in the Third Committee. She
also stated that although the GOA does not have instructions
on country-specific resolutions, in principle, the GOA has
not changed its position since last year.

Country-specific Resolutions

Belarus: Poloff explained that although the GOB's overall
human rights record remains very poor, the recent release by
the GOB of its last political prisoners in August was a
welcome sign. She added that if this positive trend
continues, the USG believes introducing a human rights
resolution at the UNGA Third Committee this year might be
counterproductive. Fernandez stated that Argentina's
position on Belarus had not changed, but agreed that the
release of political prisoners was a good sign. She said
that Argentina will continue to monitor the situation in
Belarus, but it must continue positive change for Argentina
to reconsider its position.

Zimbabwe: Fernandez stated that Argentina would "wait and
see" whether negotiations would help resolve the current
conflict before deciding whether a resolution is warranted.

Sudan: Fernandez stated that the GOA has not issued formal
instructions yet, but that in principle, the UN Human Rights
Council (UNHRC) should renew all Special Rapporteur mandates,
especially the Sudan's.

Thematic Resolutions

Freedom of Religion: Fernandez explained that Argentina
abstained last year on the "defamation of religions"
resolution sponsored by the Organization of Islamic
Countries. She stated that if the resolution's text is the

same, Argentina will continue to abstain. She noted that Argentina co-sponsored the EU's Religious Intolerance resolution last year, and would do so again this year. When asked if Argentina could work to encourage the EU to introduce the resolution in the Third Committee as well as the UNHRC, she said the GOA would have to consider the matter. She added that the GOA supports the idea in principle, but prefers to avoid the duplication of debate in the UNHRC and the Third Committee.

Freedom of Expression: Fernandez noted that Argentina upholds the right to freedom of expression but would have to discuss internally to suggest tactics to defend this principle at the UN. She opined that a generic resolution condemning states that restrict freedom of expression would be "too problematic" and could lead to an "infernial debate" over the definition of freedom of expression. Speaking unofficially, she stated that the GOA would "not discard" strategies to vote against resolutions that infringe freedom of expression rights when they come up at the UN or supporting amendments to resolutions to strengthen such rights.

Prisoners of Conscience: Fernandez noted that the GOA did not sign the declaration and was studying it. She said that if the Declaration were re-opened to new signatories, the GOA would look at the text closely. She stated that in principle, the declaration is a good one, but that there may be concerns in the Latin American region over the paragraph where countries commit to making the release of prisoners of conscience a priority in their relations with other countries.

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Human Rights Consultations

12. (SBU) Per ref B, poloff told Fernandez that DRL/MLGA would be willing to discuss these issues in the coming weeks in response to the GOA's interest in holding informal bilateral consultations on human rights issues expressed at the July senior-level bilateral consultations (ref C). Poloff relayed that DRL/MLGA had held digital video conferences (DVCs) with Canada, the EU and Poland to discuss human rights issues with positive results. Fernandez welcomed the idea, saying that she is traveling to Geneva to participate in the upcoming UNHRC, and a DVC would be a good opportunity to share perspectives after the UNHRC session.

WAYNE